



## **cherry chapstick (reddie) by aapplejuice**

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**Summary:** “my hands are cold” “put them in my pants”

## 1. one

psa: basically all of this story is going to be a trigger warning

piper is dead.

"piper is dead."

"my older sister, piper, is dead."

she jumped off a bridge two weeks ago- or maybe three- i don't know. i stopped counting around the same time i stopped eating, and sleeping, and showering, and when the fun family dinners turned into an indefinite silence with us just staring at our laps. hell i haven't even left the house since she did it. and somehow the school decided the best solution would be for me to start with

the ASSG: after school support group.

but honestly? i'm over it.

not the support group in question, but the "it'll be okay"s and the sympathetic smiles and the pitiful side hugs that mean absolutely nothing.

they didn't decorate her locker with pictures of her or posters saying "rest in peace," or "gone but never forgotten." they didn't have an assembly for suicide awareness, or even an announcement over the intercom. they pretended like nothing happened.

and my parents- oh my god don't even get me started on my fucking parents.

my mother hasn't left the spot on the couch, where the police sat her down and told her that piper had jumped off a bridge and died. she won't speak to me, or look at me. she just sits there and stares at the wall.

i understand that she's hurting, we all are but she can't neglect me. i'm her child too.

and my father. he's there. more so than mom is, but not often. he's worried about her, and he wants her to get better. so he feeds her soup and takes care of her and pretends like nothing is wrong in the Tozier household.

so here i am. and i'll sit here, and enjoy the free chocolate chip cookies and lemonade, and i'll sit in this circle and spill my bloody, helpless guts all over these floor, for you other other high schoolers and i'll pretend like everything is peachy for three months. then the school counselor will sign me off and i can continue on with my sad, sad, pathetic life.

cool.

the awkward silence that falls over the room is a clear warning sign that the sentences i had thought i'd said in my mind; to myself, for no one else to hear, i'd actually said aloud; in the support circle, to everyone else, for them to hear.

the social worker pushes her glasses up the bridge of her nose and gives me one of those lovely, beautiful, fake smiles that i know all too well at this point. "well richard, that was quite a lot. but we are glad you're here to figure things out." she nods her head and continues on with that awful smile.

and then she pushes her gaze towards the kids around me, and they get the memo.

they all groan in unison, "we support you, richard."

## 2. two

friday.

the last day of the week.

students flood out of the hallways, meeting up with friends, stopping at their red colored lockers, pushing out the doors, in order to get to their cars and out of the parking lot.

where they can go home to their families.

their families that aren't torn apart to pieces. they can walk through their front door and when their parents ask them about their days they can scoff and run upstairs.

no respect, no reverence, no reason to appreciate the fact that they have somebody left to care.

and while kids shove past me, i stand in the halls, waiting. waiting for the motivation to strike me so i can walk into the school gym and sit down on my plastic blue chair in that little circle of problems, and tell a whole bunch of people that don't know me all about my "issues."

and of course, they have no shame, no blame, no reason to believe anyone stuck me here to shut me up.

and the poor girl i sit beside.

if you think i'm a sob story, you've got some issues yourself, because she hasn't stopped shaking since the second i saw her.

she tucks her short red curls behind her ears and hides her face in her hands, and avoids eye contact at all costs.

and she's so beautiful too, but she's absolutely skin and bones. she looks like she hasn't eaten in weeks.

that's somebody who needs support. not me.

i'm fine.

i'm fine.

and by the time i finally find my courage to enter the gym, group is already half way over. yet i'm still standing in the now empty hallway all by myself.

i can't go in there. last time, i made a fool of myself. and now i'm late and they've already started, and when i walk in, i know, i know they'll all be judging me.

so i just stay there.

like a dog, i sit and stay, with my back against the lockers and my head hanging down.

my mouth is dry, and i try to lick my lips to put some moisture back into them, but it doesn't work very well, since my tongue is equally as dry.

so i walk over to the metal water fountains at the front of the school, and lean down to take a sip. but instead of getting a sip of cool water, relieving my mouth of the desert it has become, i'm introduced to the thought of piper;

jumping off a bridge into running water.

her body all purple and hard like the marble counters in my kitchen, lying on the surface.

she did it in march. march.

when it's all sunny out and the flowers are starting to bloom and all the birds are chirping and everyone's happy.

how fucking selfish of her.

if i were her i would have done it during some time in november.

on one of those cold, rainy days, when the pavement and the metal railing are damp from the drizzle in the air, and it's gloomy and

foggy, and everyone is left to wonder "did he really jump? or did he just make one wrong move?"

### 3. three

my weekend was a bust.

i stayed up in my room and laid in bed for hours.

my body was too heavy to pick up, and i was sticking to the sheets with my sweat, and my mind couldn't function on a human level. and it's not like i could be like all the other teenagers at my school and go get drunk with my friends and play spin the bottle with nameless faces or anything because i don't have anyone to do that with.

so i stayed in my bed for the whole two days, and honestly i don't have any regrets. if i were to have gone downstairs and seen my mom, i would've just been in a worse position than before.

four o'clock. group starts in ten minutes.

i'm about to go hide beside my locker again, when the frail girl with the fiery hair stops me.

she looks like she wants to say something, like she is aching to speak, but instead she's just shaking, and her mouth lies open, waiting to form words.

she shakes her head and her eyes start tearing up.

i know how she feels, i know what it's like to be overwhelmed with nervousness. to feel like your tongue has swelled up to the size of your mouth, so i smile, and answer the question i know she was wanting to ask me.

"i'm richie," i stick my hand out for her to shake, and she looks up from her own hands with a surprised look on her face.

she wipes her eyes and nods her head, "beverly," she chokes out, just loud enough for me to hear, and grabs my hand to shake it with her fingertips.

she's still shaking, and her hand is wet with tears.



"listen, i was planning on skipping group, do you want to go sit somewhere with me?" i know she won't. i know she'll be too afraid to skip, and risk getting in trouble or called out in front of the whole group;

but she surprised me.

she still didn't speak, she didn't really move either, except for the slight nod of her head, and that was all i really needed.

i knew that kids would still be at school, and i didn't want her to have to be around them, so i walked right into the empty girls bathroom and sat down on the floor in the very last stall.

a minute passed by, and then another, and i was beginning to think that she had changed her mind- that she wasn't coming after all, but then i heard her footsteps, and almost immediately after, she was towering over me.

"sit," i ordered. more like suggested, but ordered nonetheless. and she did as i asked, sitting down with her arms wrapped around her legs across from me on the with linoleum.

and we sat there for about the whole hour that we should have been in group, neither of us saying a word, until i heard an inaudible mumble come from her side of the stall.

at first, i wasn't even sure if it came from her, i thought maybe someone else was in the bathroom with us, but then she repeated it, louder this time.

"i'm sorry." she wasn't crying anymore. she wasn't shaking very much either. and for the first time, she made eye contact with me.

i shook my head, "why are you sorry?" i asked, curiosity pumping through my veins.

"i've burdened you haven't i?" she looked back down at her feet. "you should be in group, not with me." now that was pretty redundant considering i wouldn't have gone to group even if she hadn't talked to me, but i didn't tell her that, i just shrugged.

"it's okay. i'd rather be here with you, than in there anyways." i laughed softly.

her phone buzzed, and she gasped. "i have to go. my boyfriend is waiting in the parking lot." she nodded her head, beginning to stand up. she offered her hand out and i grabbed it, so she could pull me up.

honestly i wasn't surprised she had a boyfriend. she was gorgeous. her crimson hair, short and curly. contrasting with her green eyes, and the millions of freckles dotted across her nose and cheeks. she was sweet, she deserved a boyfriend, and i was happy for her.

"and who is the lucky guy?" i asked out of pure curiosity.

"Eddie Kaspbrack." she sighed.

i'd heard of the kid before. he was a grade above me, and i knew he was on the football team, but i haven't spoken a word to him since the sixth grade. they seemed like an odd couple, but i didn't question it, because usually the people you'd never expect to be together are the best couples.

so i started walking out of the bathroom and waved my hand, "i'll see you tomorrow beverly."

and when i turned back around she smiled at me.

for the first time, she smiled.

a/n hello and welcome to my first authors note ;) uhh so the reddie shit is gonna start soon, i realize that this story is moving slowly but it'll pick up soon.

okay cool.